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ETHIK. EINE DARSTELLUNG DER ETHISCHEN PRINCIPIEN UND DEREN ANWENDUNG AUF BESONDERE LEBENSVERHÄLTNISSE. Von Dr. Harald Höffding, Professor an der Universität in Kopenhagen. Unter Mitwirkung des Verfassers aus dem Dänischen übersetzt von F. Bendixen. Leipzig: R. Reisland, 1888. Pp. xiv., 492.

Of all the more recent books on systematic ethics, I regard Professor Höffding's "Ethik" to be the best. Condensed as it is, it offers a completed whole, both in its treatment of philosophical principles and in its practical application of them. It is the work of a wise and good, a highly-cultivated, and, in the best sense of the word, a modern mind. It was prepared for beforehand by a valuable little book on "Die Grundlegung der Humanen Ethik" (German edition, 1880), and by the "Psychologie" (Leipzig, 1887), one of the most excellent and readable presentations of this science that we possess.

The first part of the work treats of "The Presuppositions of Ethics." The author here explains the relation of positive morality to scientific ethics, proves that philosophical ethics is independent of theology and metaphysics, and examines the principles and methods of ethics. He shows that a gradual succession of different points of view is possible. The most radical is that of "the sovereignty of the moment" (represented by Aristippus). By reasoning it cannot be overthrown, as little as the next higher, that of "the sovereignty of the individual;" and likewise also there is no merely logical transition from this stand-point to that which regards the welfare of the family or cast or nation or race or of all mankind as the ethical aim. The transition to a higher stage is attainable only through a development of the feelings; to bring it about is not a task of an abstract logical, but of a psychological-pedagogical nature. When the conditions of life for the higher, the more comprehensive whole are formulated in definite thoughts, the ethical law arises. From the point of view of "human ethics," which takes into account the totality of sentient beings, "the contents of the law can be nothing else than the principle, that conduct ought to aim at the greatest possible welfare and the greatest possible progress for as many conscious beings as possible." The objective principle, therefore, which Professor Höffding recognizes is that of universal welfare. "In accordance with this principle," he explains, "no action and no institution or manner of life founded upon conduct is of worth, so far as it does not further the life and happiness of conscious beings." "The principle of welfare has the same place in ethics which the principle of causality has in the theory of knowledge."

An excellent analysis of conscience follows. In it the author sees "a great race-instinct," which develops—through the clearer and distincter evolution of the ideas that direct it—into "practical reason." The inner sanction of conscience alone is adequate in itself to maintain the moral life in its integrity. Thereby is received the independence of ethics, as regards dogma and metaphysics. The next chapters treat of "The Freedom of the Will," "Moral Evil," "The Theory of Welfare," and the division of ethics into individual and social ethics. The former is disposed of in about sixty pages, the latter requires three hundred. The part on social ethics falls into three divisions,—*"The Family," "Civilized Society,"* and *"The State."* Both parts are full of wise teachings and

spirited observations. Of special interest are the chapters on those "burning questions," The Women question and the Social question.

As I understand, an English translation of this admirable work is planned.

G. v. G.

SYSTEM DER ETHIK MIT EINEM UMRISSE DER STAATS-UND GESELLSCHAFTS-LEHRE. Von Friedrich Paulsen, a.o., Professor an der Universität Berlin. Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1889. Pp. xii., 868.

Like the work of the Danish philosopher, Professor Paulsen's book is not a work of mere scholarship, but it gives us the quintessence of the author's own life and experience. But the German thinker's mind belongs to a more conservative type, both in matters of philosophical principle and of social reconstruction.

After an introduction on the essence and aim of ethics, the author gives, through about one hundred and fifty pages, an "Outline of a History of Views of Life and of Moral Philosophy." Especially noticeable is his presentation of early Christianity. He shows how fundamentally different this is both from the Greek and the modern view of life, in that it condemns the things of this world and finds the true home only in another. According to Professor Paulsen, Christianity brought "three great truths" into the consciousness of humanity: "Suffering is an essential side of life;" "Sin and guilt are an essential side of life;" "The world lives by the sacrificial death of the innocent and the just."

The second part of the work treats of the "fundamental ethical conceptions and questions of principle." The author first defines the conception of the good. Good signifies "fit to bring forth certain results, which at last all converge into one object,—human welfare." Reasons, which seem to me quite inadequate, induce the author to reject the identity of universal welfare with universal happiness or pleasure. Universal welfare consists, in his opinion, in every one's attaining "the highest good," and this consists "in the normal or healthy exercise of all the functions of life themselves, with which the nature of this being is endowed" (p. 210). This definition does not seem to me to possess the clearness which the highest criterion of action must have. Ought all the faculties of every man to be developed? Are there not also bad tendencies? But the author himself does not abide by this definition; he soon (p. 215 *et seq.*) gives another in that he declares "A human life has worth in proportion as the specific and higher functions in it are developed and in proportion as these have drawn the lower ones into their service. . . . The activity of the social and intellectual virtues and excellences accordingly constitutes the proper goal of human life. . . . We have, therefore, gone wholly back to the Aristotelian definition,—Happiness or welfare, or a perfect life, consists in the activity of all virtues and excellences, especially the highest." But how can the author speak of "higher" and "lower" energies when he has yet to establish the worth of things? How can he speak of virtues before he has settled what good actions are, since virtues are nothing else than characteristics, which guarantee good actions in the future?

Professor Paulsen's disquisition on the highest good terminates with the transcendental. He says (p. 217), "We name the All-real, so far as we consider it